



IOWA

A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

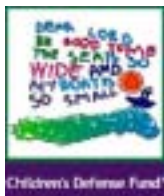


September 2005

The Brookdale Foundation

Across the United States, more than 6 million children are being raised in households headed by grandparents and other relatives; 2.5 million children are in these households without any parents present. As the children's parents struggle with substance abuse, mental illness, incarceration, economic hardship, divorce, domestic violence, and other challenges, these caregivers provide a vital safety net to children inside and outside of the foster care system. This fact sheet provides important information and resources for the grandparents and other relatives raising children in your state.

National and State Data*



The Children

- Nationally, 4.5 million children are living in grandparent-headed households (6.3% of all children under age 18). This represents a 30% increase from 1990 to 2000.
- There are another 1.5 million children in the United States who are living in households headed by other relatives (2.1% of all children under 18).
- In Iowa, there are 22,985 children living in grandparent-headed households (3.1% of all children in the state). There are another 6,312 children living in households headed by other relatives (.9% of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Iowa, 11,230 are living there without either parent present.

The Grandparents

- Nationally, 2.4 million grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them: 29% of these grandparents are African American; 17% are Hispanic/Latino; 2% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3% are Asian; and 47% are White. 34% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 71% are under the age of 60; 19% live in poverty.
- In Iowa, 13,073 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [1,484 in Des Moines]: 6% of these grandparents are African American; 4% are Hispanic/Latino; 1% are Asian; 1% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; and 85% are White. 42% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present.

Additional Information

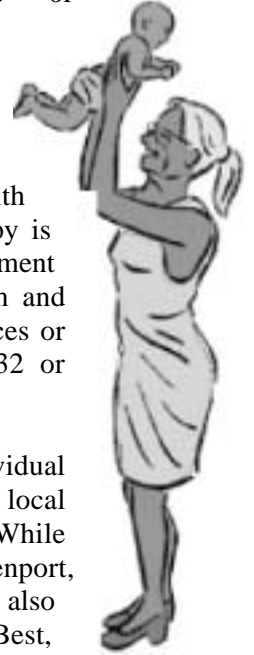
- United States Census data on grandparents who are responsible for meeting the basic needs of their grandchildren can also be broken down by county, congressional district, and other categories. Log on to <http://factfinder.census.gov>. Additional data on grandparents and grandchildren are available at www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/grandparents.html.
- Additional national and state data on grandparents raising children is available on AARP's website at www.aarp.org/families/grandparents.

* These data are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau Table DP-2. Profile Selected Social Characteristics:2000.



Programs That Can Help

- *The Iowa Department of Elder Affairs (DEA)*, through a grant from The Brookdale Foundation's Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP), provides a variety of services and support to grandparents and other relatives raising children. Such services include support groups, referrals for public benefits and other available government services. *Contact:* Nicki Stajcar, Consumer Protection Advocate, Department of Elder Affairs, at (515) 242-3320 or nicki.stajcar@iowa.gov.
- *The Muscatine Community Y* provides a comprehensive Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program, which offers a monthly support group for grandparents and other relatives raising children. The program also offers individual and group counseling, educational seminars, group recreational activities, legal and medical guidance, and recreational services to relative caregivers. All of the organization's services are free of charge, open to the public, and include free child care and transportation to all meetings. This program is part of the Brookdale Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP) network. *Contact:* Diana Broderson, Program Director, at (563) 263-9996 or dbroderson@muscatiney.org.
- *Parents United of North Central Iowa* is a treatment program for families who have experienced child sexual abuse and includes a treatment team trained to provide services for families affected by sexual abuse. Treatment consists of a three part modality; individual therapy, group therapy, and community skill development. Group therapy is led by therapists specially trained to work with sexual abuse issues and often includes a peer facilitator. Groups meet weekly. Individual therapy is scheduled as needed and may include dyad, couples, or family therapy. Community Skill Development teaches members skills of communication, leadership, and organization, as well as self esteem and confidence to accomplish projects. They also offer referrals to caregivers in need of legal services or other types of assistance. *Contact:* Catherine Weitzel, Executive Director, at (641) 424-5232 or parentsunitednci@aol.com.
- *Iowa State University Cooperative Extension, Scott County Extension* offers group and individual support to grandparents and other relatives raising children. It has monthly group meetings at the local YMCA. There is a different topic addressed every month, such as legal issues, coping skills, etc. While primarily a Scott County program, the group serves the Quad-Cities area (Bettendorf, Davenport, Moline, and Rock Island) as well. Monthly calls are made to all group participants. The group also organizes a large outdoor social event for kinship care families every summer. *Contact:* Jennifer Best, Extension Educator, Iowa State University Cooperative Extension, Scott County Extension, at (563) 359-7577 or at Jbest@iastate.edu.
- *Family Services, Relatives As Parents Program* is a kinship program in Cedar Rapids that offers support groups for grandparents and other relatives raising children as well as an educational curriculum covering topics such as financial and legal options for kinship care families. Individual and family counseling is also available for adult relative caregivers and the children in their care. *Contact:* Lary Belman, Director of Professional Services, Family Services, (319) 398-3943 or lbelman@familyservicesiowa.org.



Children in Foster Care

Sometimes state child welfare agencies place children in foster care with grandparents or other relatives. Most state agencies call these placements “kinship care.” In Iowa, the Department of Human Services, Division of Behavioral, Developmental, and Protective Services for Families, Adults and Children reports:

Number of children in kinship care: As of April 1, 2005, the Iowa Department of Human Services had a total of 4,832 children in out-of-home placements. Of those children, 1,716 were placed with relatives.

Preferences for kinship care: State policy requires that adult relatives be given preference over non-related caregivers when an out-of-home placement is required for a child.

Kinship care licensing: There is no separate licensing program for kinship foster parents. Kin have to meet the same

licensing standards and receive the same foster care payment rate as non-kin foster parents. The relative must meet all relevant state child protection standards, including a criminal background check, and must be related to the child through blood or marriage.

Subsidized guardianship programs: In addition to foster care payments and other benefits available to kin raising children in the foster care system, some states have subsidized guardianship programs. Most of these programs offer ongoing subsidies to children who have left foster care to live permanently under the legal custody or guardianship of relatives. Iowa no longer has a subsidized guardianship program.

State kinship care contact: Questions about kinship foster placements should be directed to Charlcie Carey, Foster Care and Adoptive Program Manager, Iowa Department of Human Services, Division of Behavioral, Developmental, and Protective Services for Families, Adults and Children, at (515) 281-5358 or ccarey@dhs.state.ia.us.

Public Benefits

Children are often eligible for state and federal benefits even if their caregivers do not have legal guardianship or custody. These programs include:

Financial Assistance: Cash assistance may be available to children and their grandparents and other relative caregivers through the Iowa’s Family Investment Program (FIP).

- A “child-only grant” is for the child and based *only* on the child’s income.
- An adult caregiver may also be included in the grant — based on their income and subject to work requirements and time limits.

Call (800) 972-2017 or log on to www.dhs.state.ia.us/financialhealthandworksupports.

Food Stamps: Kinship care families may also be eligible for food stamps to help meet their children’s food and nutrition needs. For more information, call (800) 972-2017 or log on to www.dhs.state.ia.us/.

Health Insurance: Grandparents and other relative caregivers may apply for free or low-cost health insurance on behalf of the children they are raising through Medicaid or HAWK-I. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free coverage under Medicaid. For more information about how to apply for these programs, call (800) 257-8563 or log on to www.hawk-i.org.

Other Benefits: Other state and federal benefits may also be available to eligible children, such as child care subsidies, disability benefits, and special education services. For more information about these, download CDF’s benefit guides for grandparents and other relatives raising children at www.childrensdefense.org or call (202) 662-3568. For more information on the federal benefits that may be available to caregivers, log on to the National Council on Aging’s Benefits CheckUp web site at www.benefitscheckup.org.



State Laws

The following state laws may be helpful to grandparents and other relatives raising children¹:

Standby Guardianship (Iowa Code § 633.560): This law allows a parent, under certain circumstances, to designate in writing a standby guardian to take over the day-to-day care of a child in the event of a parent’s death, incapacity, or inability to function in a parental role, without limiting the rights of other living parents.

Open Educational Enrollment (Iowa Code § 282.18): This law allows a caregiver to enroll his child in a public school in a district where the parent or guardian does not reside under certain circumstances.

¹*Laws change and are subject to different interpretations. These general descriptions are not intended as legal advice in any particular situation.*

National Resources

AARP Grandparent Information Center	(888) 687-2277	www.aarp.org/grandparents
Adoption Information Clearinghouse	(888) 251-0075	http://naic.acf.hhs.gov/
The Brookdale Foundation Group	(212) 308 -7355	www.brookdalefoundation.org
Child Welfare League of America	(202) 638-2952	www.cwla.org
Children’s Defense Fund	(202) 628-8787	www.childrensdefense.org
Generations United	(202) 289-3979	www.gu.org
GrandsPlace	860) 763-5789	www.grandsplace.com
KINship Information Network	(772) 501-0502	www.kinsupport.org
National Aging Information Center	(202) 619-0724	www.aoa.dhhs.gov
National Committee of Grandparents For Children’s Rights	(866) 624-9900	www.grandparentsforchildren.org
The Urban Institute	(202) 833-7200	www.urban.org

Fact sheets are updated quarterly. Changes or additions should be e-mailed to the AARP Grandparent Information Center at gic@aarp.org. Please write “State Fact Sheets” on your e-mail subject line.